

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 12490 031732Z

17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

IO-10 OMB-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 ACDA-05 AID-05 EB-07 AGR-05

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R 031401Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4010

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12490

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR,LA

SUBJECT: SOVIET BUILD-UP IN LAOS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: A. VIENTIANE 5442; B. MOSCOW 10414

1. SUMMARY. A LAOTIAN DIPLOMAT HERE SAYS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE RECENTLY SENT TWO TO THREE HUNDRED AID-RELATED PERSONNEL TO LAOS, BUT HE HINTED THAT MORE MAY BE GOING SOON. HE STRESSED LAOS' NEED FOR AID FROM ALL SOURCES, SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING THE U.S. THE KING'S VISIT WOULD NOT BE UNTIL "AFTER OCTOBER", HE SAID. END SUMMARY.

2. LAOTIAN FIRST SECRETARY BOUNRID VONGPHASDY TOLD ENBOFF ON SEPTEMBER 2 THAT THE SOVIET HAVE SENT "TWO TO THREE
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 12490 031732Z

HUNDRED" PERSONNEL TO LAOS RECENTLY IN CONNECTION WITH SOVIET AID

PROJECTS AND MIGHT BE SENDING MORE SOON. SOVIET AID HAS INCREASED RECENTLY, HE SAID, AND HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY NEW SHIPMENTS OF OIL AND GRAIN, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO NEW AID AGREEMENT. THE SOVIETS ARE MOVING CAUTIOUSLY IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUING UNCERTAINTIES IN THE POLITICAL SITUATION, ACCORDING TO BOUNRID.

3. ON GRAIN, HE SAID THAT THE QUANTITIES FROM THE SOVIETS WERE SMALL AND THAT CHINA HAD SENT MORE. BOUNRID ALSO SAID THAT AMERICAN AID WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO LAOS, ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE MILITANT "LIBERATORS" HAD NOT REALIZED THIS. LAOS HAD SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND COULD NOT BE ECONOMICALLY INDEPENDENT, SO IT NEEDED AID FROM ANY SOURCE. POLITICALLY IT WOULD SEEK TO FOLLOW A MIDDLE COURSE. THE ONLY FOREIGN PROBLEM HE MENTIONED WAS ALLEGED SMUGGLING AND SUBVERSION FROM THAILAND. LAOS HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH ITS OTHER NEIGHBORS, VIETNAM, CHINA, CAMBODIA AND BURMA. SMALL COUNTRIES HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GET ALONG WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS AND WITH THE MAJOR OUTSIDE POWERS, HE SAID.

4. BOUNRID SAID THAT KING SAVANG VATTHANA WOULD NOT BE COMING TO MOSCOW UNTIL "AFTER OCTOBER". HIS EARLIER PLANS HAD TO BE CANCELLED BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS AND HE COULD NOT BE AWAY FROM LAOS FOR THE ANNUAL THAT LUANG FESTIVAL IN MID-OCTOBER. NO NEW DATES HAVE BEEN PROPOSED, HE SAID, BUT PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA WOULD ACCOMPANY THE KING WHENEVER THE VISIT OCCURS.

5. THE FORMER THREE-MAN STAFF OF THE LAOTIAN EMBASSY HERE HAS BEEN AUGMENTED BY A NEW FIRST SECRETARY AND WILL SOON HAVE ANOTHER SECOND SECRETARY AND A TRANSLATOR FOR THE AMBASSADOR. (IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THIS WOULD BE ONE PERSON OR TWO.) BOUNRID SAID THAT HE AND THE OTHER PREVIOUS MEMBER OF THE STAFF WOULD STAY ON. FORMER AMBASSADOR LA NORINDR WAS TAKING THREE MONTHS LEAVE IN FRANCE, SAID BOUNRID, AND WAS IN POOR HEALTH.

6. COMMENT: THIS WAS OUR FIRST CONVERSATION WITH BOUNRID IN A FEW MONTHS, AND HE WAS VISIBLY MORE NERVOUS AND CAUTIOUS THAN HE HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY. BUT HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE TO LAOS OF CONTINUED RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., INCLUDING ESPECIALLY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 12490 031732Z

CONTINUED AID. WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT HIS FIGURES ON NEW SOVIET PERSONNEL IN LAOS TO DATE, WHICH TALLY WITH LA NORINDR'S IN REF B, BUT WE SUSPECT THAT HIS HINT OF FUTURE INCREASES MAY BE FULFILLED FAIRLY SOON.
STOESSEL

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